

The Inbetween Years by JimberlyHopper

Series: [It Just Gets Stranger \[3\]](#)

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti), Kingsman (Movies), Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M, M/M

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Gary "Eggsy" Unwin, Harry Hart | Galahad, Merlin (Kingsman), Mike Hanlon, Mike Wheeler, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

Relationships: Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier, Harry Hart | Galahad & Merlin, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper, Maxine "Max" Mayfield/Lucas Sinclair, Richie Tozier & Mike Wheeler, Robin Buckley/Tammy Thompson, The Losers Club (IT) & The Party (Stranger Things), Will Byers & Mike Wheeler, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

There are twenty-seven years to wait for Mike, Will, the Kingsman and the Losers, but many an interesting thing still occurs. From August 1990 to August 2016, the lives of the groups get considerably more hectic

1. The Bridge and the Gay

August 12th 1990

Richie was crouching down at the Kissing Bridge, pocket knife in hand. After plenty of incidents with Henry during Summer last year and the bullies who replaced him after his arrest, Richie had finally come to terms with who he was. The R was crude, but still legible. The plus sign was easy to make, it would've taken a total idiot to fuck that up, yet he had still managed to almost write a percentage sign instead. The E, however, was the most time consuming. He didn't want to fuck up the first initial of the boy he liked, and he was determined not to. Satisfied with his work, Richie stood up, pocketed the knife and admired the names on the bridge. There was a "JEN" not too far from his own piece of art, and a "Sofia" to the right. The bottom panel featured a heart with a single R in the middle, clearly somebody really like him. Well either him or anyone else with a name beginning with R. Ron Perlman? Robin Williams? The identity of "R" was the greatest mystery of the twentieth century for about four seconds, at which point Richie heard the unmistakable sound of a car stopping directly behind him. *Well, this is it. This is where I die.* He thought to himself, *I survived a shapeshifting clown, but now I am to die. Farewell, cruel world.* He turned slowly, only to see a car he vaguely recognised. A slightly banged up, cream and burgundy convertible with two very familiar faces in the front. "Oh thank fuck it's you guys." Richie huffed at the sight of Mike and Will in the front.

"Hey Rich!" Will smiled at him.

"Something wrong?" Mike asked.

"No, no, just thought you were about to come kill me because I'm at the bridge with a knife." Richie was breathing heavily, though he didn't know when he had started doing so.

"Doesn't everyone carve their girlfriends name into the bridge though?"

"Yeah, but I don't *have* a girlfriend. I just have..."

“A crush?” Will chuckled, “Don’t worry man, we all have crushes at some point.” Richie smiled at this, somewhat reassured by Will’s words.

“You need a ride?” Mike asked, motioning to the back of the car.

“Oh, no, I have my bike.” Richie opposed the suggestion, but Mike insisted.

“Just put it in the back, there’s plenty of room for the both of you.” Richie did as Mike said and, sure enough, he fit with room to spare. “Where you headed?”

“I... I don’t know. My parents kicked me out.” Richie responded. It was true. He tried to come clean to his parents about who he was and what he liked, but they weren’t necessarily happy with it. They’d kicked him out of the house mere minutes, leaving him to roam. That was a couple of days ago now; he hadn’t seen his friends since then. They must know by now what he was, to stay away. Then again, they were all accepting of Mike and Will, so maybe it was just a coincidence that they were never around where Richie was.

“Are you serious?” Mike asked.

“Yeah.” Richie sounded guilty, as if he’d committed a crime.

“What the fuck happened?”

Fuck

This was the dreaded question; the one Richie had hoped to not be asked on this car journey. He’d have to come clean to another couple. It hadn’t gone well last time, but a similar reaction this time was unlikely due to their status as partners. Still, it was nerve-racking. This was a life or death situation, and all Richie saw was death.

“Rich?” Mike called his name.

“Yeah, sorry, I... zoned out. I just...”

“Don’t worry, take your time.” Will turned to comfort the boy in the back.

“I... A couple days ago, I told my parents something I shouldn’t have told them. Not for a while, if ever. I no longer have a place to stay.” With that, Mike and Will understood.

“So what?” Mike said, less of a question and more of a statement.

“What?” Richie and Will asked as one.

“I mean, why should you give any time of day to people who aren’t willing to accept you for you? So fuck them. I know you love them, but you’re gonna realise that you don’t need them. That’s what happened with my parents when the two of us left in November. Where’ve you been sleeping since then?”

“I haven’t.”

“Jesus you must be *tired*. You’re staying with us tonight.” Will said. Mike nodded in agreement. “You need to catch up on sleep.”

“W-What?” Richie was shocked at the hospitality. He knew Mike and Will were decent people, but didn’t realise they were willing to take someone who was basically a homeless child into their home on a whim. Granted, said homeless child had been a friend for nine months, but still. “Are you sure?”

“Of course! Until social services come or one of us dies, you can stay with us. You need a place to sleep, and we’re doing pretty well with the Government payouts, so we won’t be strapped for cash.” There was a brief moment of silence before anyone spoke again.

“Unless you wanna go somewhere else?” Mike added.

“No, god no, I’m just shocked.” Richie laughed quietly. “Thank you. So much.”

“It’s really not a problem. Friends help each other out.”

“No, seriously. Thank you. I was expecting to hear someone shout ‘fag!’ at me.”

“It’s cool, Richie. You don’t need to thank us for being decent people.” Will smiled at the fourteen year old as Mike drove up the road. Will turned back after a moment of silence and Richie smiled. Maybe things would be okay without his parents. They weren’t going to out him out of shame, and he still had a place to go with people who liked him. People who cared for him. Maybe, just maybe, he could move on. For a while.

2. The Second Party

Summary for the Chapter:

It's Will's twenty-first, meaning the Hawkins gang are back for a party! Mike and Will discover a dark secret while trying to escape the deafening yet seemingly silent noise of the party.

March 22nd 1992 09:56am

"Happy Birthday to..." Mike strummed the final C chord, "You." He smiled wide at his boyfriend and put the guitar to his side, leaning across the bed to hug Will. "Twenty-one. You can drink. *Wow.*"

"Yeah. *Wow.*" Will smiled as Mike pecked his lips, "I don't feel any different."

"You don't *look* any different. Just as good as ever. Breakfast?"

"What've we got?"

"Cereal."

"Ah, should've guessed." Will stood up, holding Mike's hand. The pair walked out of their bedroom and down the stairs to the living room, where Richie sat on the couch reading *It*, the same copy of the book that Jonathan had gifted Will four and a half years prior.

"Happy Birthday Will!" Richie said, looking up at the two with a grin "Can't wait to finally meet everyone."

"Me neither, I *really* miss them." Will laughed quietly. "Just a couple hours and they land. We're gonna need to get ready soon if we want to make the landing."

"Don't worry, Will. We're gonna have plenty of time to get there, let's just enjoy the morning for now." Mike reassured him.

"I don't get how you thought this was similar to the clown at all? Other than a kid named Georgie going missing down a sewer, I see

no resemblance.” Richie wondered aloud.

“I never got past Georgie going missing, it brought up bad memories.”

“*Right*. I get ya.”

March 22nd 1992 11:32am

Mike, Will, Steve and Richie stood in the airport, waiting to pick up everyone that was coming to celebrate Will’s 21st. The first off of the plane were, of course, his mom, Jonathan, Hopper and Bob. Hopper smiled at Will and Mike as he walked towards them, pulling Will into a bear hug. Ever since he’d lost El, he’d become more and more affectionate towards Will, which wasn’t exactly a bad thing. “Nice to see you, Will.” Hopper told him as he pulled away, “You too, Mike.” He offered a hand for Mike to shake, which the latter took with a smile. The two were well on their way to fixing their rocky relationship and maybe even becoming friends. Eventually.

“Oh my God, Will!” His mother called, “Twenty-one! You can drink now! I can remember when you were just a little baby, now look at you!” She hugged him almost tighter than Hop before grabbing his face and admiring it for just a second. “You’re taller than Jonathan too!” She laughed.

“Hey!” Jonathan called out, Bob by his side. The two smiled as Jonathan walked up to Will. His mother was right, Will was now three inches taller than Jonathan and four taller than Bob. “Nice to see you bud.” Jonathan smiled up at him.

“Nice to see you too, Jonathan, I missed you.” Will smiled back and hugged his brother for a moment before moving to Bob. “You too, Bob.” He smiled again and exchanged another quick hug with one of the many men who have helped to save his life.” After a few minutes of conversation, the main (and extended) Party arrived. Lucas and Max walked through the gate hand in hand, followed by Dustin and Robin, the latter of whom was with an unknown guest. Steve’s eyes widened at her appearance, which was met with a wink from Robin. Clearly the three knew each other. Behind Dustin, Robin and the

mystery girl was Nancy with whom else but Mr Scott Clarke. Of course he wasn't going to miss the twenty-first birthday of one of his best students.

"Jesus man, how are you twenty-one already? I feel like we're getting old!" Lucas joked.

"Yeah, wait 'till you're twenty-six, you'll feel ancient." Steve deadpanned as Robin and co arrived. Steve and Dustin performed their signature handshake before Dustin moved on to Will.

"Happy Birthday man! Great to see you again!" Dustin hugged Will before he managed to get a response in.

"Jeez Tammy, it's good to see you again. We haven't talked in, what, eight years? Man how'd you two meet?" Steve was talking to the stranger with Robin, who Mike had just realised was, rather discreetly, holding her hand. *Oh.*

What's the 'oh' for? Will asked, lungs still mid Dustin crush.

That's the girl Robin's dating.

Oooohhhh. That makes sense.

"Nice to see you again, Mike." Max smiled politely. The two had never been on the best of terms but still attempted pleasantries from time to time.

"You too Max. Where's Billy?"

"Somebody had to stay at the station while Hopper was out and since he's in training, they chose him."

"Oh cool. Glad he's getting his life on track after the whole being dead thing."

"Yeah me too. It's nice to have a proper brother for once, you know?"

"Yeah. I felt the same way when me and Nancy bonded after '83. Jesus it's almost been ten years."

“Oh my God it has been.”

“Hi Mike!” Nancy approached the two, surprisingly chipper.

“Hey Nance!” Mike smiled and hugged his, now much smaller, big sister, “How’s Barb?”

“She’s in college actually, she’s doing good.”

“Good to know.”

“Who’s this then?” Nancy motioned with her head to Richie, who stood slightly away from the others. He smiled at Mike when he looked over, but seemed hesitant when Mike motioned for him to come closer. Mike insisted, so Richie, reluctantly, moved to his side.

“*This* is Richie. He’s been living with us for, what, a year and a half now?” Mike informed Nancy.

“Yeah, must be.” Richie put a surprisingly nervous hand up with a small wave.

“Jeez Mike, you’ve only been living here for two!” Nancy joked. “Nancy Wheeler, Mike’s brother. Nice to meet you!” She smiled at Richie.

“You too.” Richie smiled back.

“Why’re you so chipper, Nance?” Mike asked.

“Oh, right!” She flashed her left hand, which featured a gold engagement ring on her finger. “Jonathan proposed.”

“Oh shit! Congratulations Nance!”

“Thanks Mike. You’re invited, even if mom and dad don’t want you to be.”

“How are they?”

“They’re getting angrier by the day. They think you should’ve returned by now.”

"You need to get Holly out of there, it's gonna get real bad when they decide I'm never moving back."

"Just a few more years and she'll be free. She misses you."

"Yeah. I miss her too."

Joyce, Hop, Nancy, Jonathan, Bob and Tammy had left. Tonight was the night. The party of a lifetime. Mr Clarke was even in on it; tonight was going to be a night to remember. "Tonight is *the* night. Me, Steve, Scott and Dustin have been planning tonight for months." Mike stood at the front of the living room, giving an inspiring speech. "As I'm sure you know, today is my boyfriend, Will Byers's, birthday. So, to celebrate, we have planned the birthday party of a lifetime. It's not often you hit twenty-one years old. Of course, we've had hardships. The Upside Down is one hell of an environment to grow up in. But tonight we forget that. Tonight, we party like there's no tomorrow. Tonight, we commit crimes, yes. Frankly, only like four of us can do this legally. Do we care though?" Mike pointed to the crowd in front. Everyone shouted at once,

"No!"

"No we don't! This is it. Just to be clear, nobody's parents find out about this, understand? Nobody else hears about tonight. You boys already told your parents the excuses?" Mike looked over to the five Losers who weren't living with him. They all nodded, somewhat impatiently, which satisfied Mike. "Well then, pre-party finished." He winked at Steve, "Without further ado..." Mike reached down and picked up a bottle of beer from the floor. He popped the cap and took a swig. "Let's get this party started."

Will was past buzzed. Will wasn't going to remember tonight, that was for sure. He was too drunk to stand, so he collapsed onto the couch. Steve and Dustin were blasting music from a speaker in the corner of the living room. Richie and Robin looked to be having an incredibly drunk conversation. Mr Clarke was drunkenly teaching Eddie, Bill and Lucas about something scientific. Stan, Ben, Hanlon and Max also seemed to be attempting conversation over the music,

though Will could barely hear them despite the fact that they were directly behind him. Maybe that was his own doing rather than the music, as the music was very quiet despite how Dustin and Steve seemed to be blasting it. His train of thought was interrupted when he heard a coherent thought. *We are gonna be in so much trouble tomorrow.*

Mike.

It was Mike.

Then, it clicked. The mindscape is a place where you don't have a corporeal form, it can't get drunk. They talk to each other through the mindscape. Will could think clearly now, though only if he shared his thoughts with Mike. *We are, aren't we? Noise complaints galore.* Will responded.

God, yeah. We can get off, I'm sure.

Maybe nothing will happen, I can barely hear anything.

Maybe. That would be nice, to do something without negative consequences.

Yeah. Yeah it would. There was silence from the other end for a moment before Mike asked a question.

How many deep are you?

Too many. I lost count a long time ago. You?

I don't know. There aren't enough Cokes to pretend to be drunk; we're doing the real thing this time.

Yeah, we are. But we aren't drunk in each others minds are we?

No. Because of the mindscape. I think.

We should start using that to see how people are getting on.

We should actually. Good idea. Got anyone in mind? This caused Will to hesitate for a moment before having an idea.

I do. Where are you?

Bedroom.

On my way.

Will stood up slowly and stumbled to the bedroom where, sure enough, Mike was sat. Will shut the door and sat on the bed. *Who you thinking of then?* Mike asked.

Oh, yeah. Will slowly reached under the bed and pulled out a picture. It was of Him, Mike, Hop, Joyce and Dr Owens from that night in the Lab. Bob had taken it just as they had entered. Owens was the target, so Will pointed at his face.

Him. Owens.

Oooh good choice. You know how to do this?

I was the one trapped in an alternate dimension while you figured it out.

Oh, right. Well the alcohol has definitely deprived us of most senses, so we just need to go blind. Then we should be good to go if we focus. Mike stood up and grabbed some socks, crudely tying them together. He gave one blindfold to Will and put the other on his head, sitting down on the bed in the process. Will followed suit and, within seconds, he was stood in what felt like water. Mike was next to him, meaning it had worked.

“We’re here!” Mike shouted, ecstatic. There was a moment of pause before Mike spoke again. “Where *are* we, though?” Will turned around and saw a lab in the distance, where Dr Owens was working.

“Looks like we’re still in a lab of some kind.” Will pointed to what he

saw and started walking. Mike followed close behind. As they got closer they saw a large computer screen with speakers next to it. The technology was far more advanced than any computer they'd ever seen but was still recognisable. Suddenly, someone spoke.

"So. Are you ready?"

"Not really. I don't think I ever could be ready for something like this." The computer responded. The voice was familiar, too familiar. Mike and Will looked at each other in shock, realising who it belonged to. Owens grabbed a wire and inserted it into a robot replica of a familiar eighteen year old girl. Suddenly, the robot came to life, and Owens removed the wire. The robot looked up and smiled. "We did it. We're back in business, at long last."

"We are indeed. Remember, you can't tell anybody. Do you understand?"

"Yes sir."

"Holy shit." Will whispered as the picture faded around him.

"They're making El into a robot worker. They're returning her to her original purpose." Mike said.

"They're making her the Terminator."

3. The Discovery

Summary for the Chapter:

After Mike and Will discover that El is alive, sort of, they decide they need to rescue her. This is literally just a conversation between some of the people at the party god its awful but ok

Mike and Will woke up the next morning with pounding headaches.

Please tell me that was a dream. Will thought as he got out of bed alongside Mike.

Which part?

Eleven.

Fuck you remember too. Mike responded, annoyed.

Shit.

We need to figure out where they are and rescue her.

We do.

Water first though.

“More water. Please. I am dying.” Will wheezed. He’d been drinking water and occasionally vomiting it back up for the last twenty minutes.

“Will, you need to tell us what you and Mike saw last night.” Richie had recovered far better than Will, clearly this wasn’t his first rodeo with a night like that.

“No, give him water. If he’s gonna focus on whatever he saw then he needs to be in a decent state of mind.” Ben said, handing Will

another full cup. Will nodded in thanks and Mike spoke up.

“Me and Will went into the mindscape last night to spy on Dr Owens. Don’t ask why, we were just as hammered as you.” He added in response to the confused look on Steve’s face. “He’s built a robot and given it El’s consciousness. I don’t know how or why, but he has.”

“That’s not Owens, he wouldn’t do that.” Will managed to get out through glugs of water. “Something is influencing him. We have to figure out what it is,” *glug*, “where it’s coming from” *glug* “and how we stop it.”

“While getting El back in the process.” Dustin added from the corner of the room. “Simple. Except we don’t know where Owens is, meaning we can’t track him down and interrogate him.”

“If we don’t know where Owens is, we don’t know where El is.” Came Lucas’s voice from across the table.

“Sorry, who’s Owens?” Hanlon asked from across the room.

“I thought you told these guys everything?” Steve asked.

“We did.” Mike simply responded.

“Yeah, like two years ago!” Eddie retorted. “Don’t expect us to remember everything.”

“Owens was the doctor who did all of Wills appointments after the first incident.” Mike reminded the Losers.

“Ohh that g-guy.” Bill muttered to himself.

“El could see where people were in the mindscape, right?” Max asked after a moment of silence.

“Max, you genius!” Will said, finishing another glass that Richie had so kindly brought him. “We track Owens, find out whereabouts he is, then follow him to his new lab.”

“Then what?” Mr Clarke asked.

“We find out what he’s doing, retrieve El, bring all her memories back if she’s lost them and move on.” Said Robin.

“Move on? How do we move on with a Terminator in our midst?” Richie asked, carefully stepping over a still unconscious Stan, who was out cold on the living room floor.

“Aren’t Jews banned from drinking?” Steve asked, motioning to the boy in the floor.

“That’s Muslims, I think.” Mr Clarke said in response.

Mike and Will were sat once more on the bed. They covered their eyes with more sophisticated blindfolds (scrunched up shirts) and once again found themselves in the mindscape. They both held the picture of Owens in their hands and saw him. This time outside of a coffee shop. Will knew this place. “I recognise this. From Jonathan’s college brochures.” He said.

“Do you?”

“Yeah. It’s a weird place for Owens and El to be though.”

“Why’s that?” Mike asked.

“Because it’s New York.”

“Eleven is in New York?” Steve asked, shocked.

“Eleven got to go to New York before me, even though she’s meant to be dead?” Dustin asked, clearly offended.

“What the hell are we gonna do?” Robin asked.

“We’re not gonna do anything. Not all of us. It’s too expensive.” Mike told her.

“A few of us are going to get on a plane to NYC tonight. The rest of us stay here and keep Jonathan, Nancy, Bob, Mom, Dad and Tammy busy.” Will added.

“So who’s going?” Richie asked.

“Not you guys, you’ve all got school.” Mike said immediately.

“I dropped out last year.” Richie reminded them.

“What? Why would you drop out?” Steve asked quietly.

“Trauma. From the killer clown.” Richie whispered back.

“I see.” Steve thought for a second. “I’ll come.”

“Good idea. Bring the bat.” Mike said.

“Why wouldn’t I?”

“I’m coming whether you like it or not.” Richie reminded them.

“Yeah, I figured.” Will smirked slightly at the young boy.

“I’ll do it.” Max stepped forward. “I’ll come with you guys.”

“Me too.” Mr Clarke joined her. “We’ll be back by tomorrow.”

“Are you guys sure?” Mike asked. “There’s a possibility of danger.”

“We took down an entire invasion of dogs and ten foot tall flower creatures from another dimension, I’m sure we’ll do just fine.” Max responded quickly. Shortly after, a small voice popped up.

“If Richie’s going, I want to come too. To make sure he doesn’t get absolutely disgusting before he gets back.” Eddie said, a little nervously but passing it off as a joke.

“You sure Eds?” Richie asked.

“*Don’t* call me Eds, Richie.” The other replied, trying to hide a small smile from showing.

“Whatever, Spaghetti. When are we going?” Richie turned back to Mike and Will, faint blush fading away near instantly.

“Now, I guess.” Mike shrugged.

"I'd argue for the sake of my headache but we do need to go." Will added. Mike smiled at Will's determination.

"It's settled then. Who's with who?" Mike said, clapping his hands together. "There's room for me, Will and two others in the Toddfather, the others can go with Steve."

"Aw, I was hoping I'd get to have another round in that bad boy." Steve sounded disappointed.

"Steve we're only going back to the airport, it's not a long drive."

"Yeah but still..."

"We'll come with you guys." Eddie said, grabbing Richie, "Then we have you two watching over us and Scott watching over Steve and Max."

"Since when do I need a babysitter?" Steve asked, feigning offence.

"Since you let Max drive you to the tunnels below Hawkins." Mike responded.

"What about me?" Max asked.

"Since you drove an unconscious Steve to the tunnels below Hawkins."

"Fair."

"Okay then. Rest of you clean the house and keep the others busy. See you guys soon!" Mike waved a quick goodbye to everyone and the rest followed. Will made sure to grab both his and Mike's wallets before shutting the door behind him. Steve, Scott and Max got into Steve's car while Mike, Will, Richie and Eddie piled into the Toddfather. Will turned to Mike with a smile.

"I'm getting flashbacks to '87." He laughed quietly.

"Fuck, so am I." Mike laughed in return.

"I'd ask if you're ready to end this but we both know that's not what's

gonna happen.”

“Unfortunately. Ready?”

“Ready.” Will pressed the play button on the mix tape in the car. A drum roll started, followed by some classic synth.

“Looking in your eyes I see a paradise,” Mickey Thomas’s voice came out. Will snorted.

“This is definitely not helping.”

“Nope.” Mike smiled weakly. “Definitely not.”

“What the fuck are you two talking about?” Richie asked from the back.

“Nothing.” Will responded as Mike pulled away, Steve pulling out behind him.

4. The Iron Heart

Summary for the Chapter:

Mike, Will, Steve, Richie, Eddie, Max and Mr Clarke arrive in New York to confront Dr Owens. What will happen? 612 words of this fanfiction are dedicated to repeating lines from the show and previous chapters in the other stories. I am very sorry.

They exited the airport. New York City. Wow. Judging by Mike's check in on Owens from the airport toilet, they were close. Really close. However, this was also Mike's first time in New York in a long while, so he had no clue where to go. They were going to have to base it off the building Mike saw him enter. "Where exactly are we going, Michelangelo?" Richie asked, looking at the car rental place across the street.

"The Hampton Inn. Shouldn't be too hard to find and I can feel that he's close."

"How close? Because unless it's within walking distance then we need something to get there in." Steve pointed in the direction of Richie's line of sight.

"Good thinking Steve!" Will took off towards the rental place, cars slowing down in the middle of the road to let him and his friends pass, despite their incessant horns and confused shouts. Mike saw Will reach up for a moment before turning around and inviting the others across.

"Wow, so are we just going to ignore the fact that I saw the rental first?" Richie asked while he made his way through.

"Yeah. Obviously." Eddie smiled at Richie. Their act had changed slightly since Eddie told Richie about his feelings half a year prior. The two were a (*very* discreet) couple now, and instead of insults, Eddie was softer. Of course, he still made fun, but always showed that he didn't mean it, never planning on calling his best friend- no, *boyfriend*- an asshole again. Why would he? There was no need.

“Wow Eds, I didn’t realise how you hated me so.” Richie put on a Shakespearean voice and feigned offence, causing Eddie to laugh quietly.

“Whatever, Chee.”

“Don’t call me ‘Chee.’”

“Don’t call *me* ‘Eds.’”

“Fuck.” Richie huffed out a laugh.

“God what took you guys so long?” Will asked the rest of the group around him.

“What the hell made those cars stop for you?” Max asked, bewildered. Clearly she’d forgotten with the, still intense, hangover that Will also had powers.

“I don’t know; guess they didn’t wanna kill a child.” Will shrugged.

“We celebrated your twenty-first like twelve hours ago.” Max deadpanned.

“Yeah, but he’s still pretty short. And cute.” Mike laughed to himself quietly.

“I figure I should go in because I’m the most respectable looking of you guys.” Mr Clarke suggested. “No offence, but you guys look like you had the most intense party of your lives.”

“We did.” Steve said.

“Yeah, but he doesn’t look like he did.” Eddie said in response, motioning between Mr Clarke and Mike. Mike, who was wearing an incredibly creased shirt which was far too big, had a dishevelled and greasy mop of hair on top of his head, who was wearing short jeans and odd socks. And Scott, who looked like the school teacher he always had been, though now growing out a beard to accompany the moustache. Eddie didn’t even know why Mike owned a shirt that looked straight out of his mom’s wardrobe, but that didn’t matter. Point was Mike looked like he’d been drunk last night, Scott didn’t.

“I’ll come too. I don’t look too bad, do I?” Mr Clarke gave him the once over.

“Yeah, you’re safe. Let’s go.”

After bundling the seven of them into the small car, Mike couldn’t wait to get to the Hampton Inn, so he was relieved when they arrived after just a couple moments. They exited the vehicle and made their way through the entrance. Mike and Will pulled out government IDs issued to them by Owens himself after Demo-Day and requested to go to his room or wherever he was. The receptionists seemed reluctant but showed the seven to the basement, where they said Owens was. They left the two behind before opening the door. The lab was identical to the one Will and Mike saw on their first spying session, down to the robot Eleven. Owens was MIA, but Eleven wasn’t. “El?” Mike asked, “Is that really you?” He walked over to her, opening his arms for a hug. She throttled him, lifting him off his feet, eliciting gasps from the other six.

“Who the fuck are who?” Asked Eleven.

“El, put him down! It’s us! Will, Mike, Steve, Max, Mr Clarke!” Will shouted.

“Who?”

She doesn’t remember us.

Owens has erased her memory.

Suddenly, a terrifyingly familiar looking gate opened in the wall on their left. “Ooh, looks like we’ve got visitors!” Owens said. Steve turned as Will tried to stop El from strangling Mike.

“What the FUCK did you *do*, Owens?” He shouted, reaching the old

man in one lunging step. The doctor laughed.

“Aww, does Stevie miss the widdle giwl?” He mocked him.

“What the fuck is wrong with you?” Steve pushed him up against the wall, directly next to the gate. This peaked the interest of Richie and Max while Scott and Eddie tried to stop El.

“What’s that?” Richie asked.

“That’s a gate to the Upside Down.” Max responded, eyes wide. That distracted Eleven for a second, allowing Will to free the now unconscious Mike, who fell into Mr Clarke’s arms.

“Not the Upside Down, Little Miss. You have no idea how big the multiverse is.” Owens chuckled, unphased by the King of Hawkins High holding him against the wall. “The Upside Down is a parallel dimension, running alongside ours and affected directly by it. There’s a whole multiverse out there, alternate universes that aren’t directly affected by us. And this little thing...” He held up what looked like a TV remote with a small version of the gate opener on the end, “is the key.”

“Okay, cool beans Owens. What did you do to El?” Steve practically spat in his face.

“I brought her back for her original purpose.”

“That’s not like you man, what happened?” Will asked while restraining Eleven. Then it clicked. The uncharacteristic actions of Owens, the alternate universe talk, the thing powering Eleven. *That’s the shit Iron Man has in his chest.*

“You aren’t our Owens. You’re from another universe, aren’t you?”

“Ding ding ding! And the ki-“

“Shut the fuck up.” Steve said, punching Owens in the face. He went down, out cold, just as Mike stirred.

“What happened?” He asked.

“That doctor from another universe revived El as a robot for presumably nefarious purposes. The whereabouts of our version of him are currently unknown.” Eddie said, nursing him awake.

“I’m sure I can guess where he is.” Mr Clarke said, turning to the still open gate.

“You think so?” Max asked.

“It’s likely.” Richie replied. “If not, I’m sure we can figure out where he is.”

“Who’s going through?” Will huffed while holding Eleven’s hands down. Fed up with her fighting back, he pulled the arc reactor from her chest with his mind. She stopped moving, causing Will to wince slightly.

“Jesus, Will, you just killed her!” Mike gasped.

“She didn’t remember us, Mike. Besides, I’m sure Owens can bring her back properly.”

“Really?”

“Why do you think she strangled you?” Will laughed quietly. He put out his hand, which Mike took to pull himself up.

“You make a good point. Still...” Mike looked down at her, smile faltering.

“Mike. It’s not her, not now. We’ll get her back.”

“Are you sure?”

“Positive.” Will smiled. Mike looked back up.

“Okay then. Time for a dimension hopping adventure everyone!” Mike perked back up, raising his voice for the rest to hear.

“It’s universe hopping, Mike.” Max said. “There’s a difference.” Mike chose to ignore her and stepped forward to the gate.

“Steve, go ahead. Lead us into the unknown!” Mike motioned for Steve to go through the gate, which he did after a short look of concern for Mike. Will shared his feelings; Mike was only ever this theatrical back when they were kids playing DnD. He understood why he was like this though, trying to act upbeat when he had the opportunity to save one of his best friends and he might not be able to. Still, it concerned him. Max, Scott and Richie pushed through the gate behind Steve, Eddie and Will hanging back. “You okay Ed?” Mike asked after he didn’t go through.

“Yeah it’s just... unclear and very unsafe.”

“Didn’t you find out that you aren’t actually as allergic to everything as you thought like three years ago though?”

“No, I found out that the medicine I was getting was a placebo, though my mom has slightly exaggerated the extent of my allergies.”

“Then you’re fine! We’ll only be in there for a few minutes tops.” Eddie sighed at this.

“Fine, but if I die, Richie’s gonna tell the cops that you did it.” Mike smiled and gave a thumbs up as Eddie pushed through the thin membrane separating the universes.

“After you, my liege.” Mike bowed down like he was in some old play, but looked up when Will didn’t move. “Will? You okay.”

No. He wasn’t lying. He could see the darkness on the other side, illuminated by one singular light, presumably a torch that one of the people already inside found on the counter.

“What’s up?” Mike asked, having heard the thought.

“I...”

You need to help get him out!

I need you to tilt his head back.

You’re gonna pinch his nostrils and breathe into his mouth – twice.

It's me.

It's your mom and I love you so much.

I love you more than anything in the world.

Just breathe Will.

Breathe.

We'll go crazy together, right?

I said "Go away."

"Go away!"

Go away!

Go away!

Go away!

Go away!

Go away!

Go away!

He made me do it.

They upset him.

They shouldn't have done that.

The spy...

It's too late.

You should go now.

They're almost here.

Do you know what March 22nd is? It's your birthday.

Your birthday.

When you turned eight, I gave you that huge box of crayons.

Do you remember that? It was 120 colors.

And all your friends, they got you Star Wars toys, but all you wanted to do was draw with all your new colours.

And you drew this big spaceship, but it wasn't from a movie.

It was your spaceship.

A rainbow ship is what you called it.

And you must have used every colour in the box.

I took that with me to Melvald's and I put it up and I told everyone who came in,

"My son drew this."

And you were so embarrassed.

But I was so proud.

I was so, so proud.

Do you remember the day Dad left?

We stayed up all night building Castle Byers just the way you drew it.

And it took so long because you were so bad at hammering.

You'd miss the nail every time.

And then it started raining, but we stayed out there anyway.

We were both sick for like a week after that.

But we just had to finish it, didn't we? We just had to.

Do you remember the first day that we met? It was It was the first day of

kindergarten.

I knew nobody.

I had no friends and I just felt so alone and so scared, but I saw you on the swings and you were alone, too.

You were just swinging by yourself.

And I just walked up to you and I asked.

I asked if you wanted to be my friend.

And you said yes.

You said yes.

It was the best thing I've ever done.

Then you cast Fog Cloud and you saved us.

You saved the whole Party.

Going to talk to Dustin's girlfriend.

It's romantic.

It's gross.

El's not stupid.

It's not my fault you don't like girls!

What if you want to join another Party?

Not possible.

Are we late?

No, if anything we're early.

Please do not call me Nancy.

I prefer the name...

Will the Wise!

The spark's gone, isn't it?

I've really missed you man. I mean, really missed you.

We're screwed.

Probably. But at least we're screwed together.

Мы - артисты, которые здесь, чтобы развлекать вас.

Nice one kid.

We don't need control, we just need powers.

GET OFF MY FRIEND YOU PIRANHA PLANT MOTHER FUCKER!

Well, I guess we're going crazy together.

I'm proud of you for just being yourself.

Guys, I'm gay.

Since Will's just up and said it, I guess I will.

I'm gay.

'It's not my fault you don't like girls'

You were wrong.

What, are you not gay?

I thought the fact that you started with your sexual fantasies was a bit weird.

I was made for lovin' you baby, you were made for lovin' me.

He would've crushed them Mike.

That's what you fuckin' get, fag!

No hear, find me off edge, message.

Well fuck you, Papa.

I love you.

How does Maine sound?

I think we're gonna be okay.

Too many thoughts were flowing through Will's mind. Far, far too many. Memories. Flashing back to what happened before.

"Will?"

Will was against the wall now, breath shallow and racing just as fast as his heart.

"Will, hey, it's okay. It's just another panic attack, there's nothing to fear. Can you hear me?"

Will nodded weakly.

"Good. Okay, take a deep breath with me, count to four and then breathe out. Ready?"

He nodded again. The two breathed in, counted to four, then exhaled. After a few repetitions, Will found his heart rate slowing.

In.

One.

Two.

Three.

Four.

Out.

“Hey, Will, you’re gonna be okay. I’m here. I’ll always be here.” Tears were falling from his eyes as his heart and breath slowed at an excruciating rate. “Let’s go again.”

In.

One.

Two.

Three.

Four.

Out.

“I love you, Will. You’re safe. I won’t let anything in there hurt you.” A sob escaped his mouth, which broke him down completely. He brought his knees up to his chest and wrapped his arms around them. “Hey, hey, hey. You’re okay. I’m still here.” That calmed him somewhat. “No matter what, I’m still here.” His heart was slower now, almost normal. His breathing was hitched but tears fell no more. He looked up, eyes puffy, and saw Mike crouched in front of him. “Hey.” Mike smiled weakly.

“Hi.” Will sniffed. A moment of silence, followed by “I’m sorry.” He hung his head.

“There’s nothing to be sorry for, Will. You know there isn’t.”

“I know, it’s just...” He paused to gather his thoughts. “Nobody understands what it’s like to be trapped on the wrong side of one of those things. In a world of darkness, just like the Upside Down. The only one who might get it is Nancy, and even then I rescued her. It’s terrifying. Scarier than anybody knows. Anybody but me.”

“I know it’s hard. I know. I know I don’t understand how difficult it is. You don’t have to come if you don’t want to, I’ll stay here if you need.”

“No... we should go through. We should find Owens.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yeah. Yeah, I’m sure.”

“Okay then.” Mike pressed a kiss to his lips. “Let’s go.” The two got to their feet and Mike held Will’s hand through the gate. Into the unknown they went.

5. The Globe Trotters

Summary for the Chapter:

After Will's minor break down, he and Mike follow the others through the portal. They task their Dr Owens with restoring El while they travel across a total of three universes.

The other side of the portal was dark, though that was instantly changed when Steve flashed the light into Will's eyes. "I was wondering when you two would get here." He saw the red, swollen area around them and pulled the light away and softened. "What happened?"

"Bad memories of going through portals into dark labs." Will gave him a weak smile and Steve understood. "Can someone please find a fucking light switch?" With that, the lights downstairs turned on. Everyone was blinking like shit except for Mike and Will, who saw a slightly different room to the one they were just in. Where Robo-El lay in the other room, there was a trapdoor which seemed to have been made on a time crunch.

"Uh, guys. I think we found him." Mike pointed to the door on the floor. After a moment, everyone turned to where Mike's finger extended.

"Well don't just stand there!" Eddie huffed, "Go check!" Mike took a step forward and carefully pulled it open. Down a short staircase sat another Dr Owens, who was just about alive.

"Has it been two days already?" He asked, unable to see who was at the top.

"No, it's been like five minutes." Mike responded. "Were you dragged through a portal a few days ago by another version of you?"

"Yeah? Who are you?"

"I thought you'd remember me. Mike Wheeler, government agent." He held up the badge that Owens had gifted him.

“Oh my fucking god! What the fuck? How are you...?” He trailed off as Mike, Steve and Scott made their way down the stairs to try and help him.

“Save your energy, Sam. The version of you that took you is out cold. He’s taken El’s consciousness and put it into a robotic body, but she can’t remember us. We need you to try and get her back.”

“Give me some food and water and I’ll get on it.”

“We’ll sort you out.”

After returning to their home universe and explaining the situation to Owens (which featured a large meal and a run through of Iron Man lore), he got to work. “Why don’t you test out that multiversal travel thing? It could be helpful in a few years.”

“Really?” Richie asked, excitement clear in his voice.

“Yeah, what else is there to do?”

“You make a good point. Steve, Mike, Will, Max. I trust you can take care of those two while Scott and I bring Eleven back?”

“You have my word, Sam.” Steve gave a small, joking bow. “Where to first?” He turned to Mike, who was now holding the machine.

“I guess the one that it’s set to right now? PK66.” He opened the portal with the press of a button. Rocks were on the other side, but light was flashing too. Something was happening. “Wanna see?”

“Obviously. C’mon Eds!” Richie grabbed Eddie’s hand and pulled him through the gate.

“I guess we should go after them.” Max sighed.

“Yeah, probably.” Will said in agreement.

Eddie could see himself. Not currently, but older. He was in the air as a giant spider with the head of Pennywise opened its mouth to show him the deadlights that Bev had so eloquently described a few years ago. *Why hasn't she called since moving away that October?* He thought for a brief moment before he heard a voice call. From another cave behind his older self, an older man dressed in a Hawaiian shirt – Richie. Obviously it was Richie – ran out, clutching one of the spikes from Neibolt that Bev used. “Yippee-ki-yay mother fucker!” He shouted before throwing the spike into Pennywise’s face. Pennywise collapsed onto a spike behind him. Future Eddie fell to the rocks where future Richie cupped his face.

“Ooh, that’s cute. I wonder what’s gonna happen next?” Richie asked from his right side, hand still around his wrist. He wiggled his eyebrows suggestively as his future self began to speak. It was faint but easy to make out.

“Hey, Eds you with me? Hey, there he is! Glad you came back to the land of the living Spaghetti Man!” Future Richie said, which made his present counterpart laugh quietly. Eddie heard Mike, Steve, Will and Max step through the gate behind him, one of them gasping quietly as they saw the scene in front. “You missed it though, I got him right in his ugly fuckin’ face!” He threw a thumb over his shoulder, presumably to the corpse of Pennywise.

”Holy shit, man.” Future Eddie said in awe.

“Yeah, yeah, you can fawn over me later,” the claw was starting to move, it raised up, “let’s get you up and-“ Richie was lifted off his feet while Richie watched in sudden horror. “E-Eds? Eddie?” Present Eddie was panicking, what if this was his future and the only change was the colour of Richie’s shirt on that day? Or where specifically he got stabbed?

“Hey, Eddie, Richie. It’s okay, it’s not our Richie, for all we know he could’ve been a child molester.” Mike said, noticing the panic in their stiff bodies and expressions. “Let’s go.”

“Good idea.” Steve said, grabbing the portal machine. He shifted the numbers on the screen, “MNEL, sound good?”

“It can’t be worse than this.” Eddie gulped as Steve opened the

portal. He stepped through behind Will.

“What the fuck?” Will whispered.

“What’s this?” Richie asked from just behind.

“My old room.” Steve and Will said at once.

“You two used to sleep together?” Richie laughed, mock disgust in his tone.

“No, Steve moved in after Will moved away.” Mike stepped through with Max.

“God I haven’t been in here since we exorcised Billy.” Max muttered to herself. Will noticed a red envelope on his old desk. He remembered writing a similar looking letter after the party back in 1988. It read “Mike” in his own handwriting.

“I think this is for you, Mike.” Will said, grabbing the letter. “Or at the very least, this universe’s version of you.” He presented it to Mike, who took it with a grin.

“You should probably leave a note and tell yourself that you’ll give it back if you want me to take it.”

“Probably.” Will said, reaching for another piece of paper from the desk. He grabbed a pen and started writing.

Hi Will! It’s Will! From another universe! That’s right, we cracked universal travel! The mystery of the Upside Down is solved, everything is going pretty good! Don’t worry if that’s not a thing you’ve had to deal with. Been dating Mike for four years now, I think, so that’s nice. I hope you don’t mind, but my Mike’s got the letter to proof read for yours. If it’s good enough, we’ll bring it back as is. If not, we’ll give notes. Sorry for invading your room!

- Will.

“Right, let’s get going.” Max said when she heard people moving around the house. She took the portal gun from Steve and picked a random universe, shooting at the wall. She stepped through before

returning immediately.

“What was in there?” Mike asked at her horrified expression.

“Clown shitting into a-“ She gagged at the thought.

“Not Pennywise?” Eddie and Richie asked at once.

“No, some fat naked guy with bombs surrounding him.”

“What the fuck?” Steve whispered to himself.

“We’re going home. Which one was it, Mike?”

“Uhhh, JH08.”

“Thanks.” She shot the wall once more and stepped through. The rest followed behind her and saw the walls of the lab, where Eleven sat on the side in front of Sam and Scott.

“Ah, perfect timing!” Sam said with a smile, “We’ve just finished uploading all of her consciousness in, so she should be back to normal if we just...” he pointed to the arc reactor in her chest, “figure out how to turn this bad boy on.”

“Is *that* what you were trying to figure out?” Scott asked, surprise painted on his face, “There’s a plug right here!”

“Ah.” Owens muttered as he reached down to pick the plug up. “Ready?” He asked, turning to the group.

“We’ve been ready since we saw you bring her back before.” Mike responded, excitement and hope in his eyes.

“Okay then.” Owens plugged El in. There was no response for a second before the reactor turned blue. She was working, that was a plus. She looked up and scanned the room, wincing at the sudden light, as if the last place she’d been was dark. She saw the group by the portal and gasped.

“Mike?” She whispered.

“El?”

“Shouldn’t I be... gone?” The confusion was obvious in her flawlessly familiar voice.

“You were. For three years. Still got nothing on Barb though, only half the time.” Mike smiled at her.

“Where’s dad?”

“In Derry, Maine. We were celebrating my birthday when we saw you and an evil version of Dr Owens from another universe. He doesn’t know you’re here, thought we’d surprise him.” Will said, stepping next to Mike with a grin on his face.

“Wanna come home?” Max asked with a tender smile on hers. El jumped off the desk and shouted.

“Obviously! Let’s go!” She made her way to the door, followed by Max and Mr Clarke. The rest stayed.

“I think we should seal this off.” Richie said. “That thing is too awful for the world to use.”

“I disagree, I think it’s a re-“ Owens started but was cut off by Richie again.

“I just watched myself die, man. Lock the door at the very least.”

“What should we do with the other you?” Mike nodded to the limp body in the corner.

“Leave that to me.” Owens said, ushering the rest out of the room. One quiet shot of the gun later, he came up and locked the door. He gave the key to Richie with a “just in case” and walked out of the hotel behind the others.

“You gonna be okay, man?” Steve asked Richie as they watched El cross the road (helped once more by Will’s mind).

“Probably. I think Eddie is more fucked.” He lifted his chin slightly in the direction of Eds.

“I’m fine, Rich, just...” he trailed off, “Shocked.”

“Yeah, we all are, man. Don’t worry, we’re gonna be fine.” Steve flashed a reassuring smile in his direction as they made their way back to the airport. Arriving home was going to be interesting, that was for sure.

Notes for the Chapter:

Fanfic credits:

You’re Braver Than You Think – peachykeen66
(<https://archiveofourown.org/works/21581986>)

The Red Envelope – midnighteverlark (<https://archiveofourown.org/works/13488132/chapters/30930378>)

Shit in my Cock Hole - me (you don't deserve to see this horror)